

UNCLASSIFIED

NNNVV ESA2368A055
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E RUEHC #2608 1441616
NY CCCCC ZZH
241600Z MAY 79
M SECSTATE WASHDC
INFO AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES 4718
BT

STATE 132608

FOLLOWING REPEAT RIO DE JANEIRO 2160 SENT ACTION SECSTATE INFO
SAO PAULO 18 MAY 79, QTE:

RIO DE JANEIRO 2160

.O. 12065: GDS 5/18/85 (DEXTER, JOHN B.) OR-M
AGS: SHUM, BR
SUBJECT: (U) HABEGGER CASE

1. (U) JORNAL DO BRASIL (JB) OF MAY 8 REPORTED RIO
CARDINAL EUGENIO SALES' COMPLAINT REGARDING PUBLICATION
BY THE MAGAZINE ISTO E OF THE CONTENTS OF FIRST OF
THREE LETTERS HE HAD SENT TO THE WIFE OF ARGENTINE
JOURNALIST NORBERTO HABEGGER, WHO DISAPPEARED IN RIO
IN EARLY AUGUST 1978.

2. (U) MRS. HABEGGER CONTACTED CARDINAL SALES AT
ECCLESIASTICAL LATIN AMERICAN EPISCOPAL CONFERENCE IN
BUENOS AIRES, FOLLOWING WHICH HE WROTE TO HER ASKING THAT SHE
ADVISE HIM OF ANY PLANS SHE MIGHT HAVE TO VISITING
BRAZIL SO THAT HE COULD HAVE A CLERIC MEET HER AT THE
AIRPORT AND ESCORT HER TO A LOCAL CONVENT. HIS CONCERN
FOR HER SAFETY WAS BECAUSE OF "ARGENTINE POLICE"
LOCATED IN RIO. THE LETTER WAS FIRST DIVULGED IN MEXICO.

3. (U) ACCORDING TO JB ARTICLE (APPARENTLY QUOTING
ISTO E) HABEGGER ARRIVED RIO JULY 31, 1978, FROM
MEXICO USING ALIAS HECTOR ESTEBAN CUELLO. IMMEDIATELY
AFTER ARRIVAL HE PHONED HIS WIFE: LAST TIME SHE HEARD
FROM HIM WAS ON AUGUST 3. SHE BELIEVES HE WAS KIDNAPPED
BY ARGENTINE POLICE, "POSSIBLY WITH THE HELP OF
BRAZILIAN POLICE." BRAZILIAN JUSTICE MINISTRY, IN
RESPONSE TO HER INQUIRY, HAS VERIFIED THAT HE ENTERED
BRAZIL JULY 3, BUT HAS NO RECORD OF HIS DEPARTURE,
IN EITHER NAME. MRS. HABEGGER ACKNOWLEDGED HER HUSBAND
IS SECRETARY OF THE POLITICAL BRANCH OF THE PERONIST
MONTONERO MOVEMENT.

4. UNHCR REPRESENTATIVE SAYS HE HAS NO INFORMATION
ON THIS CASE, HABEGGER NOT BEING A MANDATED
REFUGEE AND NEITHER HE NOR MRS. HABEGGER HAVING EVER
APPROACHED THE UNHCR IN RIO.

5. COMMENT: THOUGH IT HAS NOT YET GENERATED MUCH
PUBLICITY, THIS CASE COULD CONCEIVABLY DEVELOP INTO ANOTHER
CAUSE CELEBRIN LIKE THE LILIAN CELIBERTI/UNIVERSINDO
KIDNAPPING CASE IN PORTO ALEGRE. THE CARDINAL
HAS LONG BEEN ACTIVE IN ASSISTANCE TO ARGENTINE REFUGEES,
SUBJECT THAT HE HAS MENTIONED IN SEVERAL CONVERSATIONS
WITH ME. IN AT LEAST ONE CONVERSATION, ON JANUARY 25,
1978, HE BROUGHT THE SUBJECT UP AND EXPRESSED CONCERN
OVER OPERATIONS AGAINST REFUGEES IN RIO BY ARGENTINE
POLICE ACTING, HE SURMISED, OUT OF THE ARGENTINE
CONSULATE.

6. EMBASSY CONCURS.
NGTE CHRISTOPHER
2608

UNCLASSIFIED

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Action F/H
File
5/24/79
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ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)
U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS
Margaret P. Griefeld, Director
Release () Excise () Deny
Exemption(s):
Declassify: () In Part () In Full
() Classify as () Extend as () Downgrade to
Date Declassify on Reason

BA-9
4-12-76

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